[Shri Moturu Hanumantha Rao]

of rice to each starving family are given. Ex-gratia payment should be made to the families of the bereaved at the rate of Rs. 50,000. All those cuts introduced in the Budget in regard to the handloom industry must be done away with the old allowances and quotas be immediately restored. Twenty two items reserved for the handloom industry legislation must be protected by including it in the 9th Schedule. Despite serious agitations, Satyagrahas, *Rasta Rokos* by all parties and picketing before the State Secretariat by elected representatives of the people, the Government had shown total indifference. I hope the Government would even now wake up and move quickly in the matter. I wish that the Government comes forward with a statement on this.

Need to maintain the existing metre gauge line on the Madurai Maniyachi route while implementing the project for conversion of metre gauge into broad gauge

SHRI V. GOPALSAMY (Tamil Nadu): Sir, through you, I would like to draw the attention of the Government to a very serious matter which has been agitating the minds of the people of the Southern districts of Tamil Nadu. It is regarding the Karur-Dindigul - Madurai Maniyachi Railway Project. We have been demanding this project for many decades. Without taking into account the sufferings and hardships to which the people will be subjected, they designed the project. There is a 127 kilometre long metre-gauge railway line which is already existing there. It was constructed by the British one hundred years back. As per this project they are going to dismantle this metre-gauge line and are going to convert it into a broad-gauge line. We welcome the broad-gauge line, but not at the cost of the metre-gauge line. If they remove the metre-gauge line and put up a broad-guage line, passengers from the southern districts from Kamaraj district, Tirunelveli district, Chidamabarnar district and the Kanyakumari district and also the pilgrims coming from the North and other parts of India and the passengers who will be visiting these districts, if they want to travel to Madras, they would have to get down at Madurai, because beyond Madurai up to Madras via Trichi there is only a metre-gauge line. So, the facility which the people have been enjoying for nearly one hundred years, they will be deprived of it. In such a situation they would have to get down at Madurai and switch over to the metre-gauge trains. If they remove the metre-gauge line and if there is only a broad-gauge line there, only broad-gauge coaches will be there. Then the broad-gauge trains will be going via Karur, which is a round-about route. The people will have to go to Villumpuram and Trichi. While the Railway is meant to provide facilities and amenities and new benefits to the people, in this they are taking away the benefits and the facilities which the people have been already enjoying for decades. The project was sanctioned in 1981. That year itself in the Railway Budget discussions I pointed out about this serious flaw in the project. Since then every year in the Railway Budget discussions I have been demanding of the Railway Minister to modify it. Our demand is to go in for a parallel construction as you are doing beyond Madurai. You keep the metre-gauge line and construct the broad-gauge line side by side with the metre-gauge line. When Mr. George Fernandes took the reins of the Railway Ministry last year, I met him and explained to him about this project and he was convinced about it. Then he called for the General Manager of the Southern Railway and discussed with him this project. I also had a discussion with the General Manager of the Southern Railway. He was also convinced of this project. He immediately instruc-

ted the officials to make a new survey and estimate. An estimate was prepared. The difference in the cost is only Rs. 5 crores. That report was sent to the Railway Board. For that the Railway Board has pulled up the General Manager of the Southern Railway. They told him, when we have already announced about the project, what right have you got to change it? This is the temperament and attitude of the officials of the Railway Board who do not look into the problems, hardships and sufferings of the people. This is a very serious matter.

On the 24th July this year while participating in the Railway Budget debate, I made an elaborate speech about this problem. Then, we held a demonstration on the 28th October in Madurai itself where thousands of people cutting across party lines have participated. Then the Railway Users Association in Tuticorin have also organised a demonstration wherein Members of Parliament, Legislators belonging to the Congress (I) and other parties cutting across party lines have participated in the demonstration. The Railway Board in Delhi is a white elephant of this country. They never care for the interests of the people of remote corners of this country. The people of Tamil Nadu particularly from the Southern... (*Time bell rings*)... I crave your indulgence for a couple of minutes. The people of Tamil Nadu particularly from the Southern region have been taken for a ride. It is being done because of the cabalier attitude of the Railway Ministry particularly the Railway Board. Therefore, the people have decided that they will demand for a parallel line. But the Railway Ministry is thinking in terms of removing the metre gauge line and is going in for conversion. It is being totally opposed by all the districts of the Southern region and the people belonging to various political parties. So we will not allow them to touch that Railway line which is 100 years old. We have been enjoying these facilities for all these years and at what cost we should lose them? We are not cattle. We cannot be treated like that. This is the attitude of the Railway Board. Sir, Maniyachi is a place which has found a place in the history of the freedom struggle of this country. One Mr. Vanchi shot dead Mr. Ash, collector. He was also a martyr like Bhagat Singh. It was a symbol of the British imperialism. Therefore, the design of the Railway Ministry from Madurai to Maniyachi should be modified. I am pained to say that never in the history of the Railways of India such an idiotic and foolish design could have been made.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI RANGARAJAN KUMARAMANGALAM): The language is a little unparliamentary. The word "idiotic" is not used in Parliament.

SHRI V. GOPALSAMY: No sensible person will prepare such a design.

SHRI RANGARAJAN KUMARAMANGALAM: I have no objection to the word "sensible person". That is perfect.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. NAGEN SAIKIA): If it is unparliamentary, it will be removed from the record.

SHRI V. GOPALSAMY: No person will accept the design of the Railway Ministry. For many years we have been enjoying these facilities, even during the British period. Now the people will have to protect the facility. They will be subjected to innumerable hardships. Is it possible for the common man with their kith and kin and their baggage getting down from the train and

[Shri V. Gopalsamy]

finding reservation in some other train? It is horrible. It is a very serious matter. The people of this region have already expressed their resentment and opposition to this project. Therefore, I request the Government to consider the sentiments of the people and go in for construction of a parallel line. Thank you.

THE INDIAN SUCCESSION (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1990

THE VICE-CHAIRAMN (DR. NAGEN SAIKIA): Mr. Rangarajan Kumramangalam to move the Bill.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LAW, JUSTICE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI RANGARAJAN KUMARAMANGALAM): Sir, I move:

> "That the Bill further to amend the Indian Succession Act, 1925, be taken into consideration."

The Indian Succession Act, 1925 was passed to consolidate the law relating to testamentary and intestate succession as was prevalent in the country at that time. Chapter III of Part IV of this Act lays down the rules of succession to the property of a parsi dying intestate. Section 51 of this Chapter deals with the divison of the property of a male pars dying intestate among his widow, children and parents. Clauses (a) and (b) of sub-section (1) of that section provide that the share of each son shall be double the share of a daughter on such intestate succession. However, section 52 provides that in the case of a female parsi dying intestate, the widower and each child will receive equal shares and where there is no widower, the children (i.e. sons and daughters) will receive equal shares. Thus, on the father's death, the son is entitled to double the share of the daughter in the property of the father. In contrast, on the mother's death, the son and daugher get equal shares of the property left by the mother. There is discrimination definitely against daughters in the case of devolution of property of the father. The Law Commission of India has, in its one hundred and tenth report on the Indian Succession Act, 1925, also observed that the discrimination between sons and daughters does not seem to be reasonable at the present day. They had further stated that such a discrimination is opposed to the spirit of Article 14 of the Constitution. The Law Commission has, therefore, recommended that section 51 of the Indian Succession Act should be amended so as to provide that the daughter and son get an equal share of the property of their deceased father.

We have received a unanimous representation from the Parsi community for removal of the aforesaid discrimination and to provide in the law that the sons and daughters shall receive equal shares of the property of their father dying intestate. The Parsi community has also demanded for consequential changes in sections 52 to 56 and in Schedule II of the Act which gives a list of heirs for succession to the property, for removal of discrimination between male and female standing in the same degree of propinquity. It has, therefore, been decided to bring in the present amending legislation before this House. This is also in keeping with the policy of the Government to undertake the review of the social legislation concerning marriage, divorce, inheritance, etc. in consultation with various organisations including women's organisatons